

LaRae at Turtle Mountain Community College Choosing Health Opportunities for Indian Career Enhancement (Project CHOICE)

LaRae Schindler is a full-time nursing student at Turtle Mountain Community College. She is also a first-time mother. She finds it can be difficult being a full-time college student on top of being a first-time mother but says, “I am managing to juggle it all. I am making it work with the help of Project CHOICE,” a Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program from the Office of Family Assistance.

LaRae has significant challenges in pursuing her education while managing so many other responsibilities. As a 28-year-old adult, she lives with her baby and her husband, and the family has bills, such as rent, car payments, insurance payments, day care, etc.

Project CHOICE has assisted her in many ways. The project pays LaRae’s tuition and book fees, so “that is one less worry I have,” she says. The project also pays for her uniform, required for clinicals, and for her mileage, which she calls “a blessing.”

In addition, Project CHOICE pays a set amount per month toward her child care expenses. It will also pay the fees when she goes to take her national board examination.

LaRae says, “The Project CHOICE staff are there for us any time we need them, answering questions, encouraging us, and offering us advice. If I were not a Project CHOICE student, I am unsure if I would still be able to be a full-time college student. Sometimes all the juggling can be stressful. However, I know the payoff in the end will become even greater. This is a temporary situation which points towards a better and brighter future. I have always believed that the things you work for in life are the things you value the most (such as my education). I would like to thank Project CHOICE for giving me a chance to succeed in my own story.”

Nichole at Turtle Mountain Community College
Project CHOICE

Hello, my name is Nichole Azure. I am a mother of three, a full-time employee at the Bottineau Good Samaritan Nursing Home, and a recent graduate of the LPN program at the Turtle Mountain Community College.

It has been a long and difficult journey in getting to this stage in my life. My goals and dreams in life have always centered on having a career in the healthcare field, but, with the many obstacles I have faced, it has taken me a bit longer than most to get here. I have recently passed my North Dakota state boards for my LPN, which is a great accomplishment. I express my utmost gratitude and appreciation to Project CHOICE in helping me achieve my dreams.

It is always a struggle to afford school, daycare, and the continually rising price of gas. Project CHOICE made it easier for me to attend class full time and receive my degree. They were there for me, not only financially, but also as a place to have any concerns I had addressed and resolved.

It feels amazing to have finally reached a goal of mine after all these years, and to have had the support of Project CHOICE these past two years was a gift. The bonus to this all was that Project CHOICE also provided the funding for my testing fees for state licensure, which I would have been saving for months to afford. Because of Project CHOICE, I now have my LPN degree and license, and not only will I be in a new career as a nurse, but they also gave me the foundation to go on for my RN degree at the University of North Dakota.